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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 067965

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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM TO SOCHI COMMITMENTS: GOOD  
GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Classified By: EUR DAS David Merkel, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Department requests Post relay at a high level a proposal to the Russian government to initiate a follow-up mechanism for our joint commitments to respect the rule of law, international law, human rights, tolerance of diversity, political freedom, and a free market approach to economic policy and practices made in the U.S.-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration agreed upon by President Bush and former President Putin in Sochi in April 2008. As one such mechanism, the U.S. proposes to initiate a government-to-government discussion about good governance and human rights with a view to pursue mutually acceptable objectives. End Summary.

#### OBJECTIVE

¶2. (C) Department requests Post relay at a high level a proposal to the Russian government to initiate a government-to-government follow-up discussion regarding our specific commitments to respect the rule of law, international law, human rights, tolerance of diversity, political freedom, and a free market approach to economic policy and practices made in the U.S.-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration agreed upon by President Bush and former President Putin in Sochi in April 2008.

--We would like to initiate discussions aimed at addressing concrete problems faced by both countries, by exchanging experiences in dealing with these challenges, and seeking out opportunities for collaboration, and arrive at mutually acceptable objectives in this area. This process could also be used to discuss sensitive cases. (NOTE: By using such a forum for raising concerns privately, we would not forgo our prerogative to raise cases publicly as appropriate to provide moral support to human rights defenders in Russia nor would discussion of human rights issues be confined to this channel; we would continue to raise concerns on human rights matters at all levels. END NOTE)

--This channel would work in parallel to the existing non-government human-rights dialogue chaired by Russia's Human Rights Ombudsman Vladimir Lukin. The non-governmental forum might be invited to share the results of its dialogue with the government-to-government forum and this might be a good source for identifying problems the two sides could then seek to resolve via government to government talks.

--In terms of participation, the U.S. representative in such talks would be Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor David Kramer and we would envision the Russian side naming someone of a similar stature and area of responsibility, such as Deputy Foreign Minister Yakovenko. Other participants could include a limited number of representatives from offices and agencies in both governments, as appropriate to the topic. For the U.S. side, this may include other bureaus of the U.S. State Department and representatives of the National Security Council, Justice, DHS, Commerce, and Federal Elections Commission.

The Russian side may want to consider including representatives of the Russian Human Rights Ombudsman, the Public Chamber, and the Chair of the Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights Council of the Russian Presidential Administration.

--We would welcome Russian ideas on possible deliverables and issues for resolution.

--Should the Russian side be amenable, we would propose holding a meeting in Moscow possibly as early as the last week of July, with the next meeting to follow in Washington at a later date to follow up on the agreed-upon objectives and begin to demonstrate progress through concrete actions.

#### BACKGROUND

13. (C) As part of the U.S.-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration in Sochi on April 6, both sides agreed to include a statement affirming our commitment to respect the rule of law, international law, human rights, tolerance of diversity, political freedom, and a free market approach to economic policy and practices. We would like to follow up on these stated commitments through a results-oriented discussion of specific steps each side could take on good governance and human rights incorporating the ideas in the

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declaration. We have begun to implement other aspects of the Sochi Declaration, honoring our commitment to move forward on the 123 agreement for example, and the establishment of the US-Russia Economic Dialogue. We hope the Russians will consider moving forward in this area as well.

14. (C) We envision that the government-to-government talks on good governance and human rights would work in tandem with the ongoing Carnegie Endowment-Lukin dialogue that has met twice over the last year. We trust that dialogue has identified concrete issues that require and are amenable to resolution and where each side could take steps that would help the other accomplish its goals of improving human rights and governance.

15. (C) The time is ripe to pursue such an agenda, as President Medvedev has articulated the importance of freedom and a desire to pursue some measures to shore up rule of law and combat corruption in order to create conditions necessary to modernize Russia's economy and foster innovation. We will of course look to see Medvedev match words (and some early actions) with a commitment to results. In his recent June 5 Berlin speech, Medvedev said that we ourselves consider human rights to be a basic and fundamental value therefore, we are open to a calm and honest conversation on any theme on the basis of reciprocity.

#### POINT OF CONTACT

16. (SBU) Post should report response by cable to EUR/RUS Howard Solomon or contact him at (202) 647-6763 or via e-mail for any necessary further background information.  
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